

November 18th 2015

**BRISTOL WATER AWARDED THE KEEP ME POSTED CAMPAIGN'S
'BEST PRACTICE' MARK OF DISTINCTION**

- **Bristol Water has been awarded the Keep Me Posted campaign's 'Best Practice' Mark of Distinction**
- **Bristol Water has committed itself to protecting the right of its 1,151,000 customers to receive paper bills and statements**

Bristol Water is the latest service provider to be awarded a 'Mark of Distinction' by the Keep Me Posted campaign. The Marks act as a symbol to help consumers instantly recognise when a business has made a commitment to giving its customers a choice in how they are communicated with.

Bristol Water serves more than 1.1 million customers and it has been awarded a Mark of Distinction due to its ongoing commitment to providing all of these customers with paper bills and statements, without charge or penalty.

Judith Donovan CBE, Chair, of the Keep Me Posted campaign, said: "I'm delighted to award Bristol Water with the Keep Me Posted campaign's 'Best Practice' Mark of Distinction. We hope that the Marks of Distinction encourage other companies to follow Bristol Water's lead and protect the right of customers to choose how they are communicated with. While many service providers are actively pressuring their customers to move away from monthly paper statements and towards online-only billing, Bristol Water has demonstrated that it does not have a 'one size fits all' approach to its customers.

"Behavioural finance research undertaken by our campaign has consistently demonstrated that consumers are better able to assess their own financial health when using paper statements (75% vs. 48% of those with electronic payments)* – whether they are young or old, computer literate or otherwise. It is in the interest of all service providers to sit up and take notice – insisting that customers 'go digital' could have an adverse effect on how they manage their money."

Ben Newby, Customer Services Director at Bristol Water said: “We recognise that our customers should have the right to choose the format that suits them best, and while online billing is growing in popularity there will always be a demand for good old fashioned paper billing through the post.”

Bristol Water joins Principality Building Society, Welsh Water, Yorkshire Water and Wessex Water as one of the service providers publically recognised by the campaign as providing paper bills and statements to its customers:

- Without imposing charges or other penalties**
- Without removing paper or altering frequency unless there is prior agreement
- Without taking away continued access to online

Judith Donovan CBE, continued: “It has always been the aim of our campaign to empower consumers and give them a voice as they are increasingly marginalised by the rush to digital. The ‘Marks of Distinction’ will ensure that when seeking a new supplier for financial services, utilities or telecoms, consumers can look out for our symbol and know their rights will be protected.”

- Ends –

Editor’s Notes:

* Research taken from Keep Me Posted **‘Managing money online –working as well as we think?’** report prepared by London Economics with research conducted by YouGov, January 2015

** The campaign will also begin rewarding some companies a ‘Good Practice’ Mark, in the event that they charge for paper bills but in a way that is considered fair and equitable to the cost of providing the bill. This follows research by the campaign that found that some providers charge up to £1.90 for a paper bill or statement, representing as much as a 442% mark up on the approximate cost to the provider.

Bristol Water is the first new provider to be awarded a ‘Mark of Distinction’ by the Keep Me Posted campaign, following its introduction to mark the campaign’s two-year anniversary.

About the campaign:

The Keep Me Posted campaign is chaired by Judith Donovan CBE and is a partnership of representatives from 85 concerned organisations such as mental health charity Mind, DementiaUK, The Money Charity, and the National Consumer Federation.

EDM 286, which recognises the work of the Keep Me Posted campaign, has achieved cross party support with 94 Members of Parliament from a range of political parties signing the motion

Keep Me Posted campaign partners believe that it is every consumer's right to choose, without disadvantage, how they are contacted by banks, utility companies and other service providers in the face of an increasing trend of businesses switching their customers to mainly digital communication, which isn't always preferable or suitable for a large proportion of UK consumers.

For further information or for more information on the Keep Me Posted campaign, please contact:

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